



Hobo code



BO TALES



PENDING

Vol. 1, No. 1, December, 1992



ORIGINAL HOBO NICKEL SOCIETY, INC.

Post Office Box 37
Boonsboro, Maryland 21713



HOBOES INVADE Florida FOR F.U.N. SHOW

BY: CRITTER

DON'T LOOK NOW but the latest news coming out of the railroad yards and HOBO jungles is that thousands of Bos are heading to Florida for the winter.

BO-TALES sent its chief investigative reporter South to find out what was going on. IT'S A MEMBERSHIP DRIVE, a Grand Gala Event to kick off the official opening of our organization.

"The Greatest Show On Earth" F.U.N. The annual convention, show and auction will be held January 7th through the 11th in Orlando, Florida.

The Original Hobo Nickel Society will have a table staffed by current officers and members to assist you in your discovery of true AMERICANA.

There will be exhibits of nickels hand carved by George Washington Hughes "BO" and his mentor Bert, as well as other true hobos of the period. Many of the club members who are fortunate enough to own such treasures have sent them down for display. In addition, there will be some modern repo-rebos of unusual quality for your viewing pleasure.

(A non-profit organization)

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

A "REPO-REBO" is a nickel that has been engraved, machined, struck, or carved in an effort to resemble the originals. The great Masters were always coped!

The club will have a table and will hold a general meeting on Thursday, Jan. 7th at 3:00 P.M. in Room 8-C. Our many thanks to GINGER BRYAN for her help and assistance in getting this worked out.

Please drop by the table and attend the meeting. There's lots to learn, lots of FUN, valuable free information, and membership applications.

SEE YOU THERE.

Join us

BRING THE ENTIRE FAMILY!

January 7 — 10, 1993

"The Pres Saps"

Old Masters again
on display

- by Dallas SHAW
President
"Colonel"

AS PRESIDENT of the Original Hobo Nickel Society, Inc., it was with great pleasure that I welcome you to volume one of "BO TALES", the official publication of the Society. We are off to a fast start since our inception at Colorado Springs this past July. In this respect, we owe a great deal to the original founding members.

WE now have an organizational structure in place. We are ready to welcome new members. With your help we can get those new members in a timely manner. For the moment, I feel this is priority number one. If each of us sets a personal goal of signing up one new member we can rapidly build our membership of dedicated HOB0 nickel enthusiasts. Without membership growth we can not survive as an organization.

WE are an educational society. If membership growth is our first priority, then our second is the education of the general public as to the art, history, and mystery of the original HOB0 artists. These pieces are true Americana. They have value. To educate members should present HOB0 nickel talks to their respective local coin clubs, historical societies art clubs and fraternal organizations such as the Lions, Elks, etc. Since I've started doing these talks I find myself in great demand. The Society can provide slides, tapes produced by Bill Fivaz; these can be purchased, rented, or borrowed. So help us by getting out and spreading the word.

The Society is an official club member of F.U.N. and we are working on our application to join the ANA. We urge all members to join these two fine and necessary organizations. At the F.U.N. show this coming Jan., 7 - 10 we will have a club table. There

will be a display of original HOB0 nickel carved by BO, BERT, and other hobos of the period. There will be a display of modern hobos. Drop by the table and meet with officers and other members. There is plenty of literature and information available, as well as membership applications. The Society will have a general meeting, Thursday Jan., 7, at 3:00 p.m. in room 8-C. I'm looking forward to meeting you.

I want also to extend for myself and my family and friends the warmest Holiday greetings and best wishes for the coming New Year. See you in Orlando.

King of the hobo nickels

Auction

Orlando

AN ANONYMOUS CONSIGNOR HAS PLACED TWO ORIGINAL HOB0 NICKELS ON THE BLOCK IN ORLANDO. The coins will be sold at public auction by the prestigious firm of Bowers & Merina.

The two coins, a "BO" and a "BERT", are original according to numismatist, author and lecturer Bill Fivaz.

IF past is truly prologue it will be interesting to see what the coins will bring. During the YN Auction held at the Summer Conference in 1991 at Colorado Springs a "donkey" (reverse carved) by BO sold for \$250. (In 1992 at the same auction a "BOS BROTHER", 1919, carved by BO sold for \$400. (See related story). (Both of these coins will be on display at the Society's table in Orlando).

Auction By: Bowers & Merina, Inc.
P.O. Box 1224
Wolfboro, NH 03894

Peace
on
Earth



Club Notes

CERTIFICATION & AUTHENTICATION POLICY STUDY UNDERWAY:

ONE of the goals stated in our articles of incorporation was to develop and implement an authentication procedure for original hobo nickels.

The Society's authenticators will be Delma K. Romines and Bill Fivaz. The two have vast experience with original hobo nickels, as well as modern reproductions. Discussions are underway and policy guidelines are being developed.

A "rough draft" of a proposed Certification form that could be used in the authentication process has been written. A committee will be appointed by Society president Dallas Shaw to carry the process forward.

The Society will grant the certification, issue a registration number, and produce color photographs of the nickel. The probable artist (if known) will be identified; and a grading scale reflecting the quality of work (not the coin grade) will be determined.

The Committee will present its findings and recommendations to the general membership and Board of Directors at the July annual meeting in Colorado Springs during the ANA Summer Seminars.

During the days when Bo, Bert, and the other original carvers were riding the rails, the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad ("B. & O.") was known by many of the hoboes at the "BEST and ONLY".

THIS interesting tid bit was provided by Bob Greene, President of the Knights of the Road, International, 3 Carraige Rd., New Cumberland, Pa. 17070. I had a wonderful discussion with him recently concerning members of his organization that might have been on road during the 1920s, 30s, and 40s. A past Queen of the Knights, Liz Williams (aka RUMP) is still active, she is in her eighties, and living in Memphis, Tennessee. Another man born in 1912 in Shanghai, China now living in Australia might have shared a boxcar with Bert. Bob also told me about the "Penny Man", a retired railroad man and one time hobo, who is a tap and die maker, produced elongated pennies, stamped with replica hoboes.



To join this fine historical organization and receive your railroad spike pin, send \$5. The New Cumberland Knights meet the third Tuesday of each month at the American Legion in New Cumberland.

SOCIETY TO SPONSOR YN SCHOLARSHIP TO SUMMER SEMINAR.

ANOTHER of our Society Goals is to sponsor a YN (young numismatist) each year to the ANA Summer Seminar held each July in Colorado Springs. The Society will pay full tuition and transportation for the young man or woman chosen.. This year's selection will be made by the ANA. Hopefully by next year we will develop a criteria to select our own candidate.

Membership

HONORARY LIFE:

- #1 Delma K. Romines
- #2 John Klies "Trapper"

CONTRIBUTING LIFE

- #1 Bill Fivaz "Zemo"
- #2. Dallas Shaw "Colonel"
- #3. Gail Kraljevich "Bo-ette"
- #4. Billy Ware "King Critter"
- #5. Wayne Sherbert "5 O'Clock"
- #6. Rich Schemmer "Paladin"
- #7. Peter "Picker" LaComb
- #8. Chuck "Buddha" Irwin

REGULAR MEMBER

Donald Farnsworth "Bert"
John Kraljevich "Special K"
Dave Wilson "Willy"
Dr. Stewart B. Foreman

JUNIOR MEMBERS (BOWEEVILS)

John Kraljevich "Junior"

NOTE: Almost all of the hoboes had a moniker. A nickname if you will. There was Colorado Joe, San Francisco Slim, Bo, Bert, and others. Each club member may pick his or her own moniker. If you don't pick, the Society will give you one. Be sure to save the list of membership each issue, otherwise, you won't know who the blazes I'm talking about.

REGULAR DUES: \$10.00
JUNIORS \$5.00
CONTRIBUTING LIFE \$250.00

CODE OF ETHICS

← Please Read

AS a member of the Original Hobo Nickel Society, Inc. I agree to support and be governed by the Articles of Incorporation and the By Laws of the Society, and such rules, policies, and regulations as may be in force from time to time.

I AGREE to conduct myself so as to bring no reproach or discredit to the Society, or impair the prestige of membership therein.

I AGREE to base all my dealings on the highest plane of justice, fairness, and morality.

I AGREE to neither buy or sell numismatic items of which the ownership is questionable.

I AGREE to conform to the accepted standards of dignified advertising. If a hobo nickel is a modern reproduction it shall be so stated.

I AGREE to take immediate steps to correct any error I may make in any transaction.

I AGREE not to sell, exhibit, produce, nor advertise counterfeit copies, restrikes, or reproductions of any numismatic items if their nature is not clearly indicated by the word "counterfeit," "copy," "restrike" "reproduction," or "modern".

I AGREE to represent a numismatic item to be genuine only when, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it is authentic.

I AGREE to fulfill all contracts made by me, either orally or written, to make prompt payments upon delivery and to return immediately any items that are not satisfactory.

I AGREE to give aid to members in their quest for numismatic knowledge.

I AGREE most of all to put the welfare of the ORIGINAL HOBO NICKEL SOCIETY, INC., above any personal gain to myself.

A breach of this Code of Ethics shall be cause for action by the Board of Directors.

**MEET
PEOPLE AND
MAKE FRIENDS**
Join

THE ORIGINAL HOBO NICKEL SOCIETY, INC.
P. O. Box 37
Boonsboro, Maryland 21713-0037

Name (please print)

Address

City

State Zip

I AGREE to abide by the Society's Code of Ethics.

Signature of Applicant

THE FINAL WORD: This is your newsletter
Send me your story, letter, clipping, etc.
I'll print it.

Happy Holidays from the Blue Ridge'''

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK:

Welcome to the first edition of "Bo-Tales". This issue started as a two page holiday greeting to the thirteen original founding members! Like the original Hobo nickel it was hand produced. No computers, no desk top programs, just old fashioned tape and scissors, and a 1950's typewriter.

SITTING around the wood stove these past few days I've spent some time thinking about all the people, past and present, whose work and dedication have helped to produce these few pages. Without their labors the Original Hobo Nickel Society would never have been organized; let alone this little rag tag publication produced.

ALL the information contained in these pages came from other people. The stationery, membership applications, membership cards, etc., were printed free of charge by J.T. Stanton. The news releases you've all read lately in the various trade publications were produced by Rich Schemmer. Gail Kraljevich has opened bank accounts, paid our bills and lobbied near and far on our behalf. Bill Fivaz, that greatest of numismatic ambassadors has sent photos and volumes of printed material and put up with a lot of telephone calls from me. Art Shaw, John Klies, Mary Shaw, Peter LaComb and Chuck Buddha Irwin and others have undertaken the awesome responsibility of representing the Society in Orlando during F.U.N. Don Farnsworth is our Education chairperson and Wayne Sherbert my dear friend and partner has driven the snowy back roads to get the material to the printers and serve as publisher. Everyone came through. Everyone did their share. What an honor it is to count myself one of them.

But alas, when it comes time to count the real laurels then we must look to Delma K. Romines. He is the real author publisher. He brought Bo, Bert, and the other real hobo carvers back to life when they were but faded and almost forgotten memories. His book Hobo Nickels, Prisoner Nickels, Shop Tokens, Modern

Engravings: An Extensive Study of Hobo Nickels, 1982, introduced us to this fascinating subject.

He is the one who deserves all the credit and it is he who deserves our thanks.

I am a Southerner. I speak with a distinctive southern accent. I write with one as well. It is a part of my culture, heritage, and tradition. I am an historian. I appreciate things that are old, lost, forgotten, miss-placed and buried with time. I am a collector. I collect memories. The Hobo Nickel to me is a piece of history; it is art, it has both real and aesthetic value. Each coin has a story to tell; all you have to do is listen.

These tokens of labor were once traded for a cup of coffee, a meager meal or cold sandwich, perhaps a ride on the next boxcar heading to a warmer climate. Now they are actively bought and sold across the country by dealers and collectors for money - from \$5 to \$400 and more!

Oh my! What a difference four hundred dollars would have made in Bo's life. Growing up with a rural family, so large and so poor they couldn't afford to feed him. Now he lies most likely somewhere in a paupers grave. But thanks to us, all of us, he like the others, is not unknown and certainly not forgotten.

advertisement

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Midlothian, Va. 23113

- Wholesale prices
- Preferred Customer programs
- Great service, satisfaction guaranteed.

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Commentary and Opinion

THERE are three sides to every coin. The obverse, the reverse, and the rim; if you don't believe this then be sure to enroll in the Mint Errors and Varieties class taught by J. T. Stanton at the ANA summer seminar.

THERE are always two sides to a story; and it has been my experience that the truth usually lies somewhere in the middle. Pros and Cons are black and white. What I'm looking for is gray. WHAT'S all the fuss over modern HOBONICKELS? They too are an art form. Some of them are very good.

UNFORTUNATELY some dealers are not honest and others wouldn't know the difference between an original HOBONICKEL and a modern REPO-REBO. Caveat Emptor. Knowledge is Power.

ON the other side, some dealers readily advertise their modern Hobos as just that, "Modern". (See ad in current Classified section.)

"MANY recently etched coins have hit the general market (&) were made only to make money from the growing hobby of hobo nickel collecting. These coins should be advertised (Emphasis added) as "Modern" to prevent bilking of the general public. They cannot be classified as Hobo, Shop Tokens or Prisoner Nickels and should not command prices anywhere near those of the original carvings. They cannot be classified as

"true fakes" as they are hand made, even though modern equipment and different methods have been used to manufacture these coins. With just a little study, these coins can be easily recognized..." Hobo Nickels, by Delma K. Romines, 1982, Lonesome John Publishing Co, p. 12.

In the Spring issue of "BO-TALES" I hope to do a story on one modern day carver. I have seen some of his coins and they are beautiful! Two will be on display at the Society's table in Orlando. They are true Repo-Rebos. Do they have value? They do to me as a collector of Americana.

ARE the modern reproductions worth what some of the dealers are asking? I have always been of the opinion that something is worth what the buyer is willing to pay!!

GEORGE WASHINGTON "BO" HUGHES loved the circus. He loved CLOWNS. My eight year old daughter loves clowns. I can not locate an original BO carved clown though I would be willing to pay a good price for it. In the local coin shop however, there are some modern repo-rebos, machine etched and handpainted CLOWNS. I will purchase one for Christmas, wrap it in holiday cheer, and present it to my daughter. She will be happy, I will be happy!

The point I'm trying to make is this: As long as the modern reproduction is advertised as being "modern" and is initialed by the producer. I have no problem with them.

HAPPY HOLIDAYS! CRITTER & FAMILY

The views expressed in this section do not necessarily reflect those of the Society or its members. They are the opinion of the author. If you have thoughts on this, or other matters of interest to the society, drop me a line and I will print them in the next issue.

Seven Stages of a Project

(According to Buddha)

1. enthusiasm
2. facing reality
3. disillusionment
4. Panic
5. Search for the guilty
6. Punishment of the innocent
7. Praise for the non-participants

* I went through all of them getting this out - CRITTER

1. Main Street good for begging.
2. Rock Pile in connection with Jail.
3. Saloons in Town
4. Prohibition Town
5. Police are hostile. Look out.
6. Police not Hostile to tramps.
7. Police Hostile to tramps.
8. Leaving Railroad for Highway or across country.
9. Railroad police not hostile.
10. Railroad police hostile.
11. Used in connection with any other sign means next turn.
12. Church or Religious People.
13. Town is Hostile. Get out Quick.
14. Main street no good.
15. Good People Live Here
16. Cranky Woman or Bad Dog.
17. People do not give.
18. Bad Man Lives Here.
19. Black section of town good for Hoboes.
20. Cooties in Jail.
21. Good Clean Jail.
22. Jail good but prisoners starve.
23. Jail filthy.
24. City Police are in plain clothes.
25. Workhouse in connection with Jail.
26. Waiting in Town for Person named.
27. Circle Town
28. Jail good for night's lodging.
29. Moniker (name) and direction to travel.



WHILE traveling across country from town to town hoboes would leave signs, and marks along fenceposts, mailboxes, town sidewalks, trees, etc., to warn and inform their fellow Knights of the Road. Many thanks to Trapper John from Michigan for sharing this with us.

HOBOS CODE (KEY TO SIGNS BELOW)

1 	2 	3 	4 	5 	6
7 	8 	9 	10 	11 	12
13 	14 	15 	16 	17 	18
19 	20 	21 	22 	23 	24
25 	26 	27 	28 	29 	

From: The Original Hobo Nickel
Society, Inc.
P. O. Box 37
Boonsboro, Md. 21713

TO: